Johnny Gets the Word

JOHNNY TOOK A FOOLISH GAMBLE, AND HE LOST PLENTY—BUT AT LEAST HE LEARNED SOMETHING. HERE'S HOW JOHNNY GOT THE WORD ABOUT A "GAME" IN WHICH THE ODDS ARE STACKED AGAINST EVERYBODY!

EVENING IN A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK...

DON'T GIVE ME THAT! WHAT DID THAT MAN SAY?
ALL RIGHT, SMART GUY! HE'S FROM THE CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND HE TOLD ME THAT SOME GUY WHO HAS SYPHILIS GAVE THEM MY NAME! HE SAID MAYBE I HAVE IT, TOO, AND I SHOULD COME TO THE HEALTH CENTER AND FIND OUT!

AND YOU KNOW WHAT, JOHNNY? IF I HAVE SYPHILIS, THEN YOU PROBABLY HAVE IT, TOO!
ME? THE SIFF?!
OH, NO!!

ELLEN, LEMME EXPLAIN! I DON'T CARE ANYTHING ABOUT GLORIA! IT HAPPENED WHEN YOU WERE AWAY THAT TIME...
HOW COULD YOU, JOHNNY?! YOU SAID YOU LOVED ME!... NO! DON'T TOUCH ME!

DRUGS
YOU MIGHT GIVE ME YOUR AWFUL DISEASE, TOO!
BUT, ELLEN, I COULDN'T HAVE...WAIT A MINUTE!

THIS IS CRAZY! HOW COULD I HAVE THE SIFF? I HAVEN'T BEEN SICK, OR ANYTHING. HEY, I KNOW... I'LL ASK OL' DOC AT THE DRUGSTORE! HE'S A GOOD GUY, AND HE'LL KNOW ABOUT THIS KIND OF STUFF.

SAY, DOC, I... I BEEN HEARING THERE'S A LOT OF SYPHILIS AROUND. IF ...WELL, LIKE IF A GUY'D CATCH IT, YOU COULD FIX 'IM UP, COULDN'T YOU?
NO, I COULDN'T, JOHNNY...

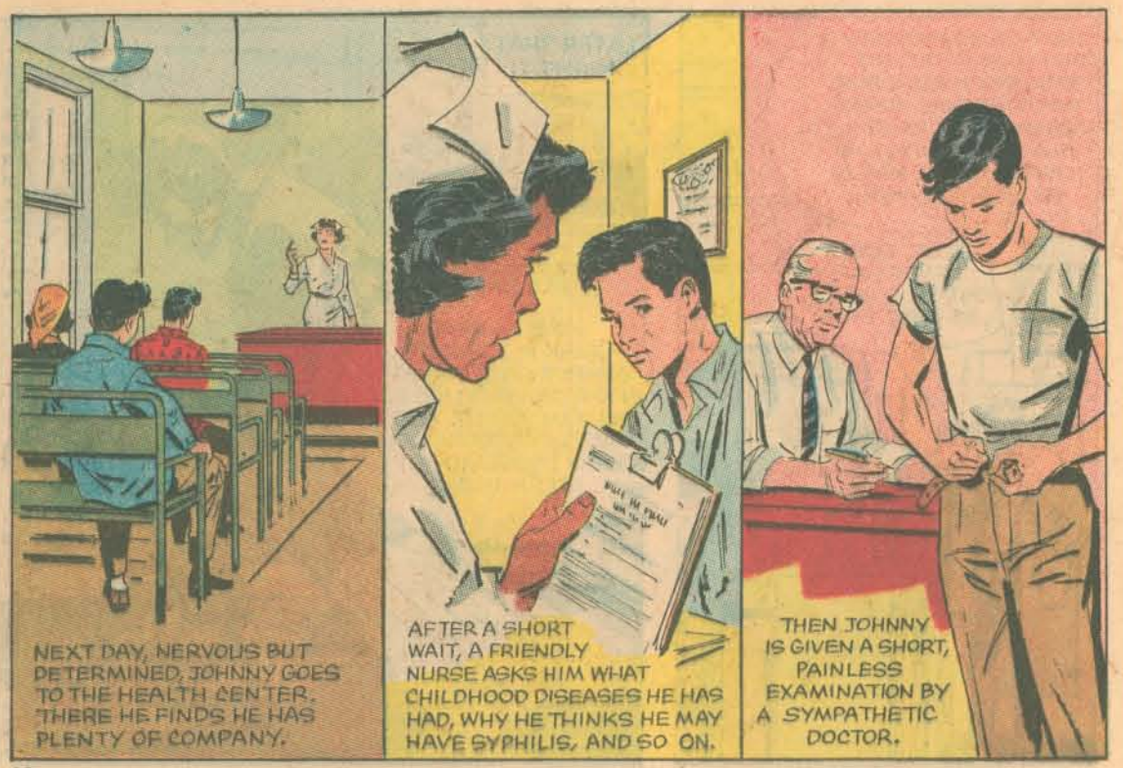
NO ONE BUT A LICENSED MEDICAL DOCTOR CAN TELL YOU IF YOU HAVE SYPHILIS, AND ONLY A DOCTOR CAN TREAT YOU FOR IT. THERE ARE "QUACKS" AND DISHONEST DRUGGISTS WHO **CLAIM** THEY CAN CURE IT, BUT THEY'LL DO YOU A LOT OF HARM.

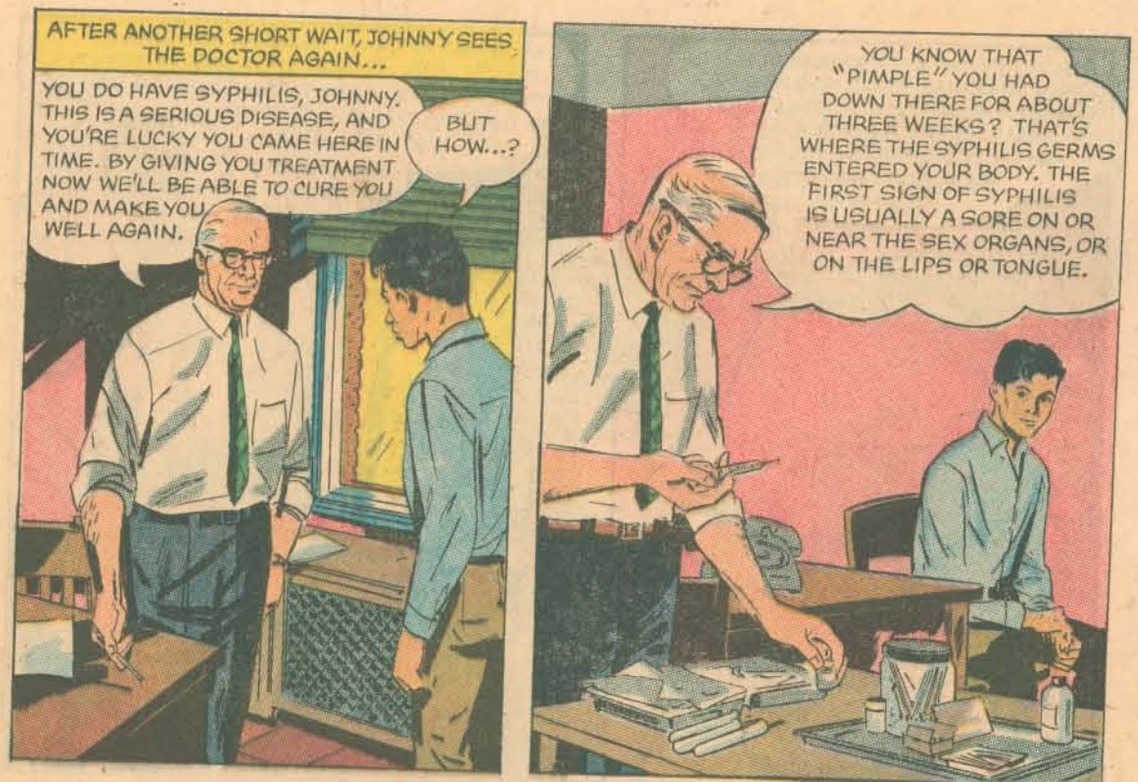
THERE ARE CITY HEALTH CENTERS WHERE YOU CAN BE EXAMINED AND TREATED FOR VENEREAL DISEASES, FREE OF CHARGE. LOOK HERE, JOHNNY, IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE SYPHILIS, DON'T GO TO ANYONE BUT YOUR OWN DOCTOR OR THE DOCTORS AT THE HEALTH CENTER.
OH, IT'S NOT ME DOC. I WAS JUST... WONDERING.

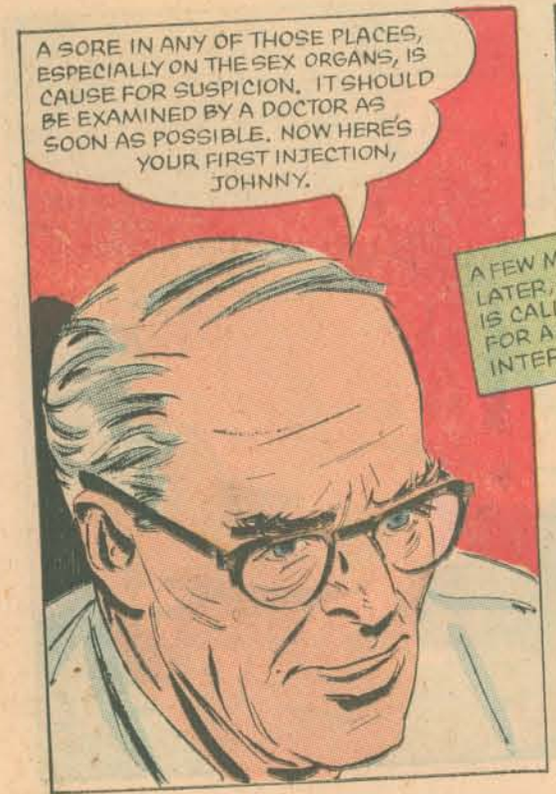
THAT'S GOOD, JOHNNY. BUT, HOLD ON. I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT A BOY I USED TO KNOW FROM THIS NEIGHBORHOOD. FIFTEEN YEARS AGO HE WAS JUST ABOUT YOUR AGE, AND A BRIGHT, HEALTHY KID...
"HE WAS A FINE ATHLETE. SMART, TOO. HE GOT HIMSELF A GOOD JOB, AND DID FINE... UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO."
"THEN HE GOT SICK, AND IT GOT WORSE AND WORSE. THE DOCTORS DISCOVERED HE'D HAD SYPHILIS SINCE HE WAS SIXTEEN, BUT HAD NEVER BEEN TREATED FOR IT."

THEY SAVED HIS LIFE, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE TO DO MUCH ELSE FOR THE POOR GUY. TODAY, JOHNNY, THAT EX-ATHLETE IS A BLIND CRIPPLE ON CRUTCHES WHO HAS TO BEG FOR A LIVING!
JEEZ, DOC, I NEVER KNEW SYPHILIS COULD BE **THAT** BAD!

LATER THAT NIGHT...
I'D BE A REAL JERK IF I TOOK A CHANCE ON TURNING INTO A CRIPPLE LIKE DOC TOLD ME ABOUT. AND MAN, I CAN'T CHICKEN OUT IF I WANT TO GET ELLEN BACK!


NEXT DAY, NERVOUS BUT DETERMINED, JOHNNY GOES TO THE HEALTH CENTER. THERE HE FINDS HE HAS PLENTY OF COMPANY.
AFTER A SHORT WAIT, A FRIENDLY NURSE ASKS HIM WHAT CHILDHOOD DISEASES HE HAS HAD, WHY HE THINKS HE MAY HAVE SYPHILIS, AND SO ON.
THEN JOHNNY IS GIVEN A SHORT, PAINLESS EXAMINATION BY A SYMPATHETIC DOCTOR.


AFTER ANOTHER SHORT WAIT, JOHNNY SEES THE DOCTOR AGAIN...
YOU DO HAVE SYPHILIS, JOHNNY. THIS IS A SERIOUS DISEASE, AND YOU'RE LUCKY YOU CAME HERE IN TIME. BY GIVING YOU TREATMENT NOW WE'LL BE ABLE TO CURE YOU AND MAKE YOU WELL AGAIN.
BUT HOW...?
YOU KNOW THAT "PIMPLE" YOU HAD DOWN THERE FOR ABOUT THREE WEEKS? THAT'S WHERE THE SYPHILIS GERMS ENTERED YOUR BODY. THE FIRST SIGN OF SYPHILIS IS USUALLY A SORE ON OR NEAR THE SEX ORGANS, OR ON THE LIPS OR TONGUE.


A SORE IN ANY OF THOSE PLACES, ESPECIALLY ON THE SEX ORGANS, IS CAUSE FOR SUSPICION. IT SHOULD BE EXAMINED BY A DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. NOW HERE'S YOUR FIRST INJECTION, JOHNNY.

A FEW MINUTES LATER, JOHNNY IS CALLED IN FOR A SHORT INTERVIEW...
MY NAME IS KANE, JOHNNY—JOE KANE. I JUST WANT TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS AND TELL YOU ABOUT SOME THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW, SO JUST SIT DOWN AND RELAX.
OKAY, MR. KANE.

KANE ASKS JOHNNY A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS HOME LIFE, HIS DAILY HABITS AND SO ON, AND THEN...
NOW, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT SYPHILIS, JOHNNY. IT'S CAUSED BY GERMS WHICH ARE PASSED FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER DURING SEX RELATIONS. HERE, TAKE A LOOK AT THIS ENLARGED PHOTO...

THERE THEY ARE...TOO SMALL TO BE SEEN WITH THE NAKED EYE, BUT THOSE ARE THE GERMS THAT DO THE DAMAGE. NOW, HERE'S AN IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER. EARLY SYPHILIS SORES **WILL DISAPPEAR BY THEMSELVES** IN THREE OR FOUR WEEKS...

...BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE CURED. THE GERMS ARE STILL IN YOUR BODY. BY THE WAY, IT'S MUCH HARDER TO TELL IF A WOMAN HAS SYPHILIS. THE EARLY SORES ARE OFTEN DEEP INSIDE HER, AND THEY DON'T HURT, SO SHE MAY HAVE NO IDEA ANYTHING'S WRONG UNTIL THE SECONDARY SIGNS APPEAR.

"THESE PHOTOS SHOW SOME OF THE SECONDARY SIGNS OF SYPHILIS. THEY'LL TURN UP FROM THREE TO SIX WEEKS AFTER THE EARLY SORES DISAPPEAR... RASHES AND SMALL SORES ON THE BACK, PALMS AND OTHER PARTS OF THE BODY; FALLING HAIR; AND SORES ON THE SEX ORGANS, LIPS, NOSTRILS AND TONGUE."

THESE SIGNS WILL DISAPPEAR TOO, WITHOUT TREATMENT. BUT AGAIN, **THE GERMS ARE STILL IN THE BODY!** ANY TIME, FROM A FEW MONTHS TO YEARS LATER, UNTREATED SYPHILIS CAN CAUSE ITS VICTIMS TO BECOME BLIND, CRIPPLED, OR PARALYZED. IT CAN ALSO DRIVE THEM INSANE, OR KILL THEM.

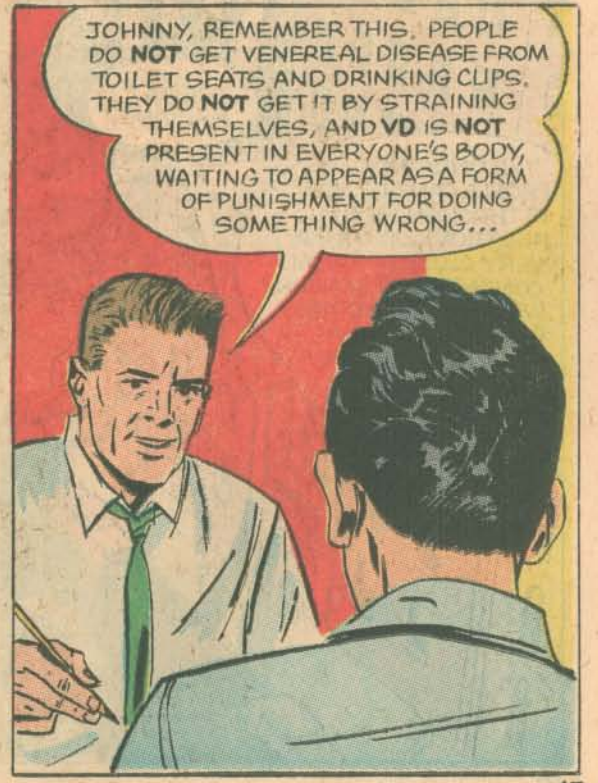
I...I HEARD ABOUT THAT.

ONE MORE THING, JOHNNY... PARENTS WITH SYPHILIS CAN PASS IT ALONG TO THEIR CHILDREN. IT WILL HAVE THE SAME EFFECTS ON THEM AS IT DOES ON ADULTS.

THAT'S AWFUL, MR. KANE!

WHAT ABOUT THE SIMPLE KIND OF SYPHILIS... YOU KNOW, THE CLAP?
"CLAP" IS GONORRHEA. IT IS A DIFFERENT DISEASE, BUT BOTH SYPHILIS AND GONORRHEA ARE VENEREAL DISEASES—VD FOR SHORT. GONORRHEA CAN MAKE PEOPLE UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN AND MAKE ALL THEIR JOINTS STIFF AND SORE.
THERE ARE NO EARLY SIGNS OF GONORRHEA ON THE OUTSIDE. BUT A MAN CAN USUALLY TELL IF HE HAS IT, BECAUSE WHEN HE URINATES HE GETS A SHARP ITCHING AND BURNING FEELING, AND A DROP OF PUS WILL USUALLY APPEAR.

UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S OFTEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR A WOMAN TO TELL WHETHER SHE HAS GONORRHEA, FOR THE SAME REASONS THAT SHE SOMETIMES CAN'T TELL IF SHE HAS SYPHILIS.
BUT WHAT'S A GUY GONNA DO, MR. KANE? IF YOU CAN GET VD FROM PEOPLE, TOILET SEATS, DRINKING CUPS...

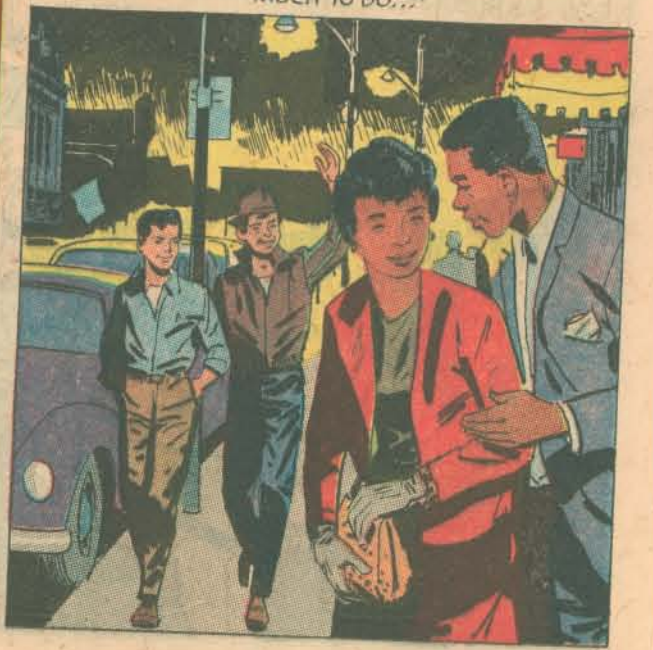

JOHNNY, REMEMBER THIS. PEOPLE DO NOT GET VENEREAL DISEASE FROM TOILET SEATS AND DRINKING CUPS. THEY DO NOT GET IT BY STRAINING THEMSELVES, AND VD IS NOT PRESENT IN EVERYONE'S BODY, WAITING TO APPEAR AS A FORM OF PUNISHMENT FOR DOING SOMETHING WRONG...

OKAY, MR. KANE.
THE **ONLY** WAY PEOPLE CAN GET VD IS THROUGH SEXUAL RELATIONS OR OTHER VERY CLOSE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS IT, AND THE **ONLY** THING TO DO ABOUT IT IS TO SEE A DOCTOR. OKAY?

SOME PEOPLE ALSO BELIEVE THAT ONCE A PERSON HAS BEEN CURED OF **VD** HE CAN'T GET IT ANYMORE, BUT THAT'S ANOTHER DANGEROUS FAIRY TALE. A PERSON CAN BE REINFECTED AGAIN AND AGAIN.

NOW, JOHNNY, I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO GIVE ME THE NAMES OF ALL THE PEOPLE YOU'VE HAD SEXUAL CONTACTS WITH IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. WE CAN'T LET THEM RISK THE DANGERS OF UNTREATED SYPHILIS, OR LET THEM PASS IT ON TO OTHERS. AFTER WHAT I'VE TOLD YOU, I'M SURE YOU CAN SEE WHY.
THERE WAS ONLY GLORIA, MR. KANE!

MR. KANE TAKES DOWN THE INFORMATION, AND THEN ASKS JOHNNY HOW IT ALL HAPPENED. "WELL," SAYS JOHNNY, "IT WAS WHILE MY GIRLFRIEND ELLEN WAS AWAY. ME AND MY FRIEND AL WERE GOOFING AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD ONE NIGHT, WITH NOTHIN' MUCH TO DO..."



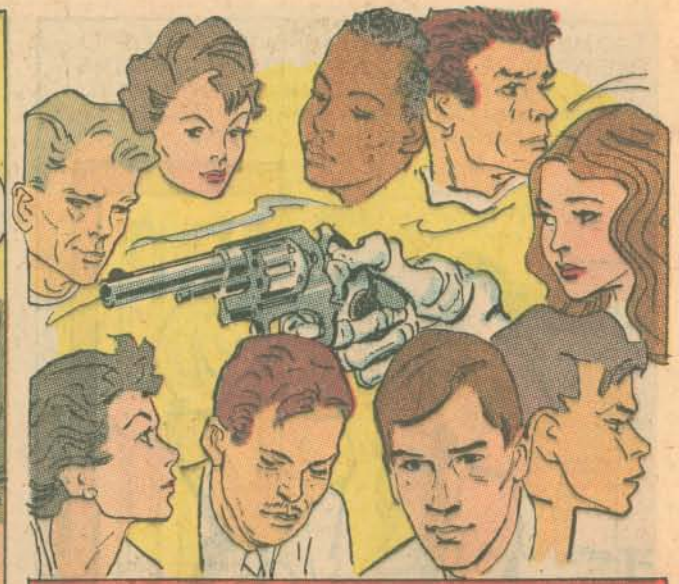
"AND WE RAN INTO GLORIA AND ANOTHER CHICK, LINDA, AT THE CANDY STORE. WE HORSED AROUND AWHILE, AND THEN GLORIA SAID THERE WAS NOBODY HOME AT HER PLACE AND WE COULD GO UP THERE AND LISTEN TO SOME RECORDS. I DIDN'T WANNA MAKE IT, BECAUSE OF ELLEN, BUT AL HAD A THING FOR THIS LINDA, AND I COULDN'T CHICKEN OUT ON HIM..."

"SO ME AND AL KICKED IN FOR SOME BEER, AND WE WENT UP. WE DANCED, AND WE DRANK THE BEER...TOO MUCH OF IT, I GUESS. ANYWAY, PRETTY SOON AL BEGINS MAKIN' OUT WITH LINDA, AND THE NEXT THING I KNOW..."

"I'M ON MY OWN WITH GLORIA. SO THERE I WAS HALF-GASSED AND ALONE WITH A REAL READY CHICK. AND...WELL, YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES!"

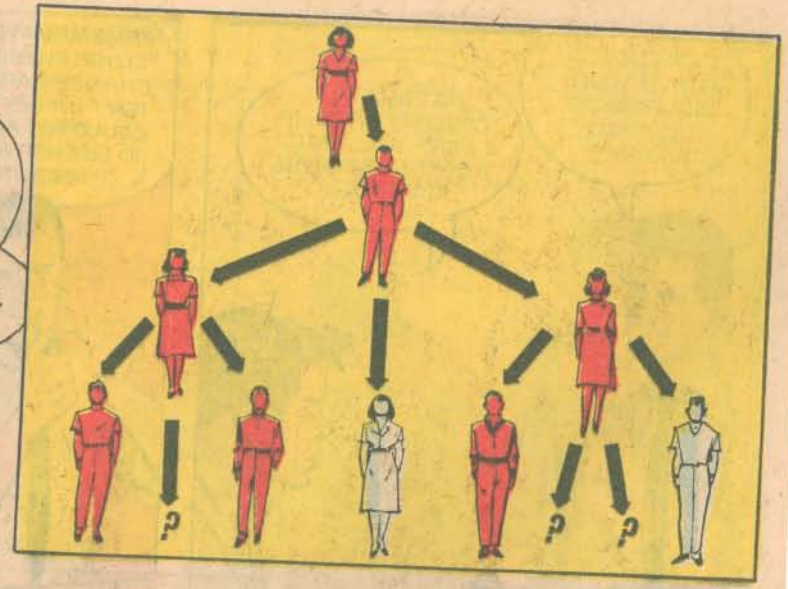
YOU KNOW, MR. KANE, IT KINDA THREW ME WHEN I FOUND OUT GLORIA HAD SYPHILIS. SHE'S REALLY A NICE KID.

VD HAS NO RESPECT FOR "NICENESS", JOHNNY. ANYONE CAN GET IT ...GOOD OR BAD, RICH OR POOR, YOUNG OR OLD.

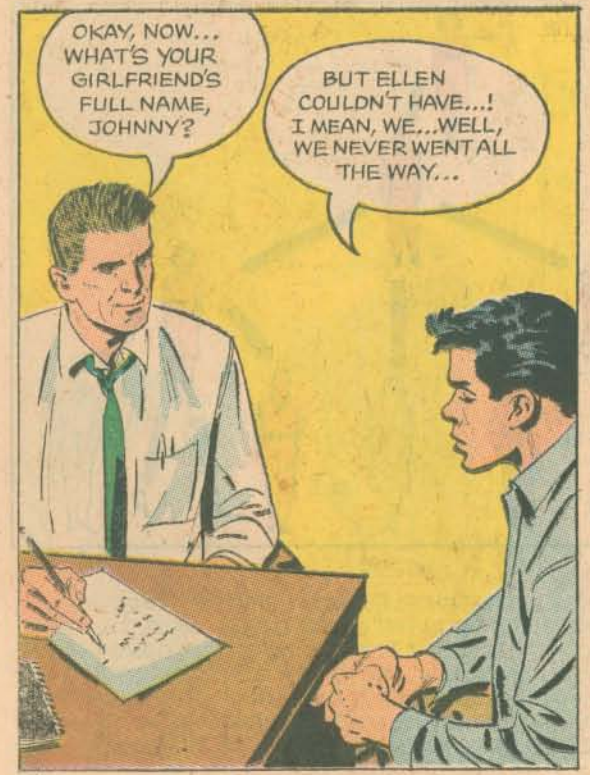


"VD IS A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM TODAY, ESPECIALLY AMONG TEENAGERS. SO MANY OF THEM HAVE IT THAT IT MAKES PLAYING AROUND WITH SEX LIKE FOOLING AROUND WITH A LOADED GUN—THE MORE PEOPLE YOU HAVE INTERCOURSE WITH, THE MORE CHANCES YOU TAKE OF GETTING HIT BY SYPHILIS OR GONORRHEA."

TAKE THE CASE OF A BOY I INTERVIEWED RECENTLY. HE NAMED FOUR SEXUAL CONTACTS—ONE PERSON HE GOT VD FROM, AND THREE HE MIGHT HAVE GIVEN IT TO. SOUNDS SIMPLE, DOESN'T IT? JUST FIVE PEOPLE. BUT LOOK AT THIS CHART...



"THE CENTER FIGURE REPRESENTS THE BOY I FIRST INTERVIEWED. WE FOUND HE HAD GIVEN VD TO TWO OF HIS THREE CONTACTS. THEY NAMED OTHER CONTACTS; SOME BECAME INFECTED, SOME DIDN'T, SOME WERE STILL LOOKING FOR. WE NEVER FOUND THE GIRL WHO GAVE THAT BOY VD; SHE MAY INFECT DOZENS OF OTHERS BEFORE SHE'S TREATED. AND THERE ARE LOTS OF CASES LIKE THIS, JOHNNY, SO YOU CAN SEE HOW FAST AND HOW FAR VD CAN TRAVEL."



REMEMBER WHAT I SAID ABOUT "CLOSE PHYSICAL CONTACT"? CHANCES ARE THAT ELLEN ISN'T INFECTED, BUT SHE **COULD** BE. ARE YOU WILLING TO LET HER GO ON WITHOUT KNOWING?
NO! I COULDN'T DO THAT TO HER! OKAY...

JOHNNY GIVES KANE ELLEN'S NAME AND ADDRESS, AND THEN...

ALL RIGHT, JOHNNY— THAT'S IT. THE NURSE WILL GIVE YOU AN APPOINTMENT FOR YOUR NEXT INJECTION. VERY SOON YOU'LL BE AS HEALTHY AS EVER! AND BY THE WAY...

...IF ANY OF YOUR FRIENDS EVER SUSPECT THEY HAVE VD, SEND THEM IN TO SEE ME. YOU'LL BE GIVING THEM A REAL BREAK IF YOU DO.
I WILL, MR. KANE... AND THANKS.

THAT EVENING JOHNNY FINDS ELLEN. IT TAKES ALL HIS COURAGE TO TELL HER WHAT HE MUST, BUT HE DOES IT...
SO YOU PROBABLY DON'T HAVE IT, ELLEN, BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE.
BUT, JOHNNY ...ALL THOSE STRANGERS KNOWING ABOUT ME...!
LAUR

THEY'RE NICE PEOPLE, ALL OF 'EM. I'M GIVIN' IT TO YOU STRAIGHT, ELLEN—THEY REALLY WANT TO HELP YOU. AND...WELL, IF YOU DO NEED TREATMENT...

IT DOESN'T HURT OR ANYTHING, AND IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO BE TREATED RIGHT AWAY. THE DOCTORS CAN CURE THE DISEASE IN A SHORT TIME.
ALL RIGHT, I'LL GO...

...AND THANKS, JOHNNY. I KNOW IT WAS HARD FOR YOU TO TELL ME ALL ALL THIS.
WAIT, ELLEN...!

YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU. I'VE BEEN A STUPID JERK, AND I'M SORRY. COULDN'T I...COULDN'T YOU FORGIVE ME...AND BE MY GIRL AGAIN?
I...I DON'T KNOW, JOHNNY. MAYBE, WHEN ALL THIS IS OVER...

MAYBE, SHE SAID...BUT THAT MEANS MAYBE NOT, TOO! AND HOW COULD I EXPECT HER TO FORGIVE ME IF I **DID** GIVE HER SYPHILIS. MAN, I REALLY **AM** A JERK!

I FEEL AS LOW AS OL "STICKS" MUST. HEY!! I WONDER IF "STICKS" IS THE CRIPPLED GUY DOC TOLD ME ABOUT...THE ONE WITH UNTREATED SYPHILIS?

DOC SAID FIFTEEN YEARS AGO HE WAS ABOUT MY AGE, AND HEALTHY. POOR GUY! HE CAN'T BE MUCH OVER THIRTY, AND LOOK AT 'IM!
WELL, THANK GOD I HAD SENSE ENOUGH TO GO TO THE HEALTH CENTER! AND I'M TAKING NO MORE CRAZY CHANCES, EITHER...I'M TOO SMART TO PLAY AGAINST SUCH LOUSY ODDS!

THAT'S HOW JOHNNY GOT THE WORD ABOUT **VD.** HE LEARNED THAT IT'S EASY TO GET, EASY TO GIVE— BUT EXTREMELY DANGEROUS TO IGNORE! **VD CAN** BE CURED. IF **YOU** EVER SUSPECT YOU MAY HAVE IT, **VISIT YOUR OWN DOCTOR OR ONE OF THE CITY HEALTH CENTERS IMMEDIATELY!**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CENTERS
FOR THE TREATMENT OF VENEREAL DISEASES

Ask for "Social Hygiene Clinic"

MANHATTAN

East Harlem: 158 E. 115 St. (TR 6-0300) Central Harlem: 2238 5th Ave. (690-2600) Chelsea: 303 9th Ave. (LA 4-2537)
Washington Heights: 600 W. 168 St. (WA 7-6300) Riverside: 160 W. 100 St. (UN 6-2500)

BRONX

Morrisania: 1309 Fulton Ave. (WY 2-4200) Mott Haven: 349 E. 140 St. (MO 9-6010)

BROOKLYN

Bedford: 485 Throop Ave. (574-5300) Fort Greene: 295 Flatbush Ave. Ext. (643-4133)
Brownsville: 259 Bristol St. (HY 8-6742)

QUEENS

Corona: 34-33 Junction Blvd. (HI 6-3570) Jamaica: 90-37 Parsons Blvd. (OL 8-6600)
Rockaway: 67-10 Rockaway Beach Blvd. (NE 4-7700)

RICHMOND

51 Stuyvesant Place, St. George (447-6000)

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